

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

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The Anatomy of Dime Novels

#12 Novels of the Circus

(Conclusion)

By J. Edward Leithead



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The Anatomy of Dime Novels

#12 Novels of the Circus

By J. Edward Leithead

Tousay's Happy Days story paper, which replaced Boys of New York the week after the latter ended with #1000 in 1894, printed many circus tales serially. Where some of these were reprinted in Pluck and Luck, I give just the numbers of the complete serial in Happy Days: #36-43, #139-146, #247-252, #288-295, #317-328, Flip Flap, or, The Tricks and Tumbles of a Boy Clown, #380-384, #421-424, Teddy, the Tumbler, or, Traveling With a Circus, #446-449, Sawdust Dave, or, The Boy Who Joined a Circus, #461-473, Sam, the Supe, or, On the Road With a Show, #511-514, Acrobat Tom, the Boy Star of the Circus, or Out With the Big Show, #603-605, Zig Zag, the Boy Wonder, or, Out With a Circus, #664-667, Samson, Jr., the Wild Beast Tamer, or, Daring Work in the Ring, #686-689, Tanbark and Spangles, or, The Boy Who Ran a Circus, #717-720, Under the Canvas, or, The Life of a Circus Boy, #768-771, Jack, the Acrobat, or, The Young Star of the Circus, #812-815, Homeless Hal, or, The Boy Acrobat of the Circus, #865-868, Roughing It in the Rockies, or, The Boys of the Stranded Circus, #875-878, King of the Ring, or, Out With a Big Circus, #920-923, Somersault Steve, the Prince of the Ring, or, Making Good With a Circus, #1033-1036, Boss of the Big Top, or, The Boy Who Ran a Circus—this was the last original circus story; #1053, 1070, 1129, 1275, 1331, 1383, 1391 and a lot more were all reprints of earlier numbers, Happy Days ending with #1563.

Tousey's Wide Awake Library:

#142, Dick Daring, the Bareback

Rider, #144, The Boy Clown, or, The Star of the Pantomime, #344, Fortunes of an Acrobat, 427, The Boy Trapezeist, #438, Sawdust Charlie, the Pet of the Ring, #470, Tumbling Tom, or, Traveling With a Circus, #567, Fred Hazzard, the Star of the Circus, #608, Out With Barnum, #702, Acrobat Ned, the Prince of the Air, #758, Barnum's Hunters, or, Trapping Wild Animals for the Greatest Show on Earth, #799, Denny, the Clown. A Story of Circus Life, #816, Lion Luke, the Boy Animal Trainer, #949, Rob Rider, the Circus Equestrian, or, Two Years Under the Canvas, #1084, The Two Boy Clowns, or, A Summer With a Circus, #1126, Billy Button, the Young Clown and Bareback Rider.

Tousey's Young Sleuth Library:

#36, Young Sleuth's Great Circus Case, or, Bareback Bill's Last Act, #87, Young Sleuth and the Runaway Circus Boys, or, Following a Pair of Wild New York Lads, #140, Young Sleuth and the Boy Circus Rider, or, Baffling a Poor Lad's Foes.

Old Cap Collier Library (N. L. Munro):

#596, The Clown Detective, #661, Old Spangles, the Circus Detective, #730, Old Grimes, the Carnival Detective.

Nickel Library (Nickel Library Co.)

#26, An Artful Dodger, or, Escape from the Circus Ring.

Little Chief Library (Nickel Library Co.)

#115, Monte, the Animal King, or, The Mystery of the Circus.

Nick Carter Library (Street & Smith)

#104, Nick Carter and the Circus

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Crooks, or, The Greatest Show on Earth.

Turning to the era of color cover dime novels we find Frank Tousey again leading in the number of circus stories in his publications. They appeared more or less regularly, and the well-drawn, colorful cover illustrations of the Tousey weeklies were admirably suited to depicting scenes of circus life—they were outstanding.

Tousey's Pluck and Luck:

#8, Young Grizzly Adams, the Wild Beast Tamer, #102, Toney, the Boy Clown, or, Across the Continent With a Circus, #298, Billy Button, the Young Clown and Bareback Rider, #311, Across the Continent With a Circus, or, The Twin Riders of the Ring, #330, Trapeze Tom, the Boy Acrobat, or, Daring Work in the Air, #343, Dashing Hal, the Hero of the Ring. A Story of the Circus, #413, Barnum's Young Sandow, or, The Strongest Boy in the World, #444, The Boy Fire King, or, Barnum's Brightest Star, #474, A Sawdust Prince, or, The Boy Bareback Rider, #518, Nino, the Wonder of the Air. A Story of Circus Life, #631, Cal, the Canvas Boy, or, Two Years With a Circus, #691, reprint of #102, #731, Al, the Boy Acrobat, or, Flip-flopping Into Fame and Fortune, #797, Archie, the Acrobat, or, The Boy Star of the Circus. Most of these circus tales were reprinted in the higher numbers of Pluck and Luck before it ended.

Tousey's Fame and Fortune:

#29, A Sure Winner, or, The Boy Who Went Out With a Circus, #143, Out With His Own Circus, or, The Success of a Young Barnum, #259, A Young Barnum, or, Striking It Rich in the Show Business, #297, Under the "Big Top," or, From Acrobat to Manager, #353, A Born Showman, or, The Boy Who Ran a Circus, #395, Out for Everything, or, The Boy Who Was Willed a Circus.

There was one in All Around Weekly, #25, Frank Melville, the Wonder of the Circus Ring (Tousey) and one in Wild West Weekly, #105, Young Wild West's Cowboy Circus, or, Fun at the Mining Camps. A couple of issues were about theatrical shows in

the West, and in two issues toward the end of the weekly, #633 and 634, Young Wild West organized a Wild West show and got caught in World War I. But Wild West shows as they used to be were not, strictly speaking, circuses, so I have not listed them in this article.

Tousey's Secret Service:

#27, Zig Zag, the Clown, or, The Bradys' Great Circus Trail, #80, The Bradys and the Runaway Boys, or, Shadowing the Circus Sharps, #131, The Bradys With a Circus, or, On the Road With the Wild Beast Tamers, #629, The Bradys on a Raid, or, Rounding Up the Circus Fakirs, #694, The Bradys and the Circus Boy, or, The Fatal Finger Prints, #726, The Bradys and the Tiger Tamer, or, The Clew in the Green Box.

Tousey's Work and Win had quite a few—Fred Fearnot was a real circus buff: #109, Fred Fearnot and the Clown, or, Saving the Old Man's Place, #139, Fred Fearnot's Circus, or, High Old Time at New Era, #295, Fred Fearnot's Society Circus, or, The Fun That Built a Schoolhouse, #328, Fred Fearnot and the Boy Acrobat, or, Out With His Own Circus, #364, Fred Fearnot and the Wild Beast Tamer, or, A Week With a Circus, #383, Fred Fearnot and the Snake-Charmer, or, Out With the Circus Fakirs, #480, Fred Fearnot and the Boy Circus Star, or, On the Road With a Big Show, #544, Fred Fearnot as Ringmaster, or, Training a Boy Acrobat, #602, Fred Fearnot's New Circus, or, Under the Canvas.

Before listing the circus titles in Street & Smith publications, let's see how a circus story was handled by a Tousey author: it's All Around Weekly #25, dated April 15, 1910, with a full color cover illustration showing the interior of a Big Top, with stands packed by spectators, a bareback rider (female) near the center ring, a trapeze performer (male) taking a tumble to the tanbark, and a startled clown in the offing. The title: Frank Melville, the Wonder of the Circus Ring. And you will have cause to believe, before you are through the story, that calling Frank a "wonder"

wasn't using too strong a term. The author was "Tom Burns," which means only that he used a stock name.

The story opens with a small wagon show celebrating the birthday of its clown, John Foster, "at a tavern in a country town in the western part of New York State." Present also are Fred Keeler, the show-manager, Sam Cook, the ringmaster, Harry Fisher, a bareback rider, Batchellor, a contortionist, and Sinclair, ticket-seller. "They had stopped on their way to join the remainder of the circus caravan to celebrate the clown's birthday.

"While they were making merry within, a mysterious-looking man, carrying a dark bundle under his arm, approached, and, assuring himself that he was not observed, disappeared within the darkness of the stable. When he came forth the bundle was not in his arms. He was about to turn back in the direction he had come from, when a burst of laughter from the merrymakers in the tavern arrested him.

"He cast a quick, cautious look into the bar; then, like a cat, he stole across the road into the stable, where he made his way to the darkest stall and took out of the manger, from among the hay, the mysterious bundle he had hidden there some moments before. With this in his arms he hurried to the wagon before the tavern belonging to the circus people. He glanced again into the barroom—the clown was saying something that made everyone laugh as they drank his health. Nervously the stranger removed the cover from a basket, deposited it in the wagon near the endgate. There was a whimper of something very young . . . the man went rapidly down the road into the blackness."

When the circus party returned to the wagon, Sam Cook, the ringmaster, had hardly started up the horse when the crying of a baby close by made him pull up sharply to investigate. It didn't take the circus folk long to discover they had a very small baby on their hands. Said the clown, John Foster, "When we catch up

with the caravan, my wife will sure take charge of this infant. Why, we'll train it up to be the wonder of the ring!"

By Chapter II, "Many years have elapsed since the events of our first chapter. The wagon show—called 'The Great London Circus'—has consolidated with the one and only Barnum, and, under the name of P. T. Barnum and London Circus, is again on the road and encamped on the outskirts of a pleasant New England town.

"A large crowd of boys and one middle-aged man were gathered without the tents, lost in admiration of the poster display on a long board fence partly enclosing the circus lot—broadside in color illustrating the marvelous acts of the ring, the wonders of the menagerie, and the mysterious attractions of the sideshow.

"While the posters were being eagerly discussed, a gentleman came driving leisurely around the corner of the circus grounds in a buggy. He was a dark-complexioned man, heavily bearded and sternly expressioned. He halted the rig at the curb near the crowd, who were staring at one poster in particular. It was the representation of a trapeze performer doing a somersault in mid-air. He was a handsome boy, probably emerging from the teens, the picture of grace and daring. Across the bill ran lines of flaring red letters, which read descriptively:

"Frank Melville, the Wonder of the Ring."

"As he gazed at it, the gentleman in the buggy overheard the crowd discussing the merits of the young performer with energetic interest.

"Ever see him?" asked the elderly man.

"No, never have," was the reply.

"Then you've missed half your life. You should see him while you have the chance. He's a marvel, without mistake."

"Guess you're a pusher for the show the way you blow him up," one boy said, eliciting a shout of laughter from the other boys while the man looked irritated.

"No—no, nothing of the sort," the

latter protested. 'What I'm telling you is honest truth. The boy's a prodigy and all of you should see him.'

"The man in the buggy was listening intently, with the look of being unpleasantly surprised." This gentleman's name was Herbert Thackston—remember it. The man standing with the group of boys looked down-at-heel, and once he glanced at the occupant of the buggy.

"He doesn't recognize me, muttered the gentleman to himself. As the crowd dispersed, the older man remaining where he was, Thackston leaned forward. 'Tippett!' he said sharply.

"The oldest started violently and stared at the bearded face.

"Don't you know a person around here of the name of Herbert Thackston,' the bearded man said. 'Don't lie, Tippett! It's fully twenty years since we saw each other. Faces change, you know. But that boy,' he leveled a finger at the poster, 'he must be over nineteen and looks like his father, my brother, at that age. You, Tippett, never disposed of that baby as I paid you to . . .'

"Tippett didn't deny it. 'I—well, I just couldn't, when there was a chance circus folk would take him out of the country and he'd grow up never knowing who he was. That name Melville, now . . .'

A little later they enter the main tent together. "The band had struck up the overture, and to this music entered the brilliant cavalcade of riders who always opened the entertainment. At intervals, timed by the equestrian director's whistle, in came the acrobats, the cannon-ball catcher, the jugglers, the liberty horses, the trained elephants; what with the efforts of all these the feast of wonder was kept running high.

"But the chief attraction was yet to come—the performance of Melville, the young trapeze artist. In the midst of fanfare from the band, out into the arena dashed a snow-white horse ridden by a beautiful young girl. This was the star equestrienne, Mlle. Marietta.

"After a few swift courses around the center ring, she suddenly sprang to an erect position, looked upward and kissed her hand gracefully toward the dome of the tent. Every eye was at once turned in that direction and far above their heads they beheld the figure of a handsome boy, swinging with the ease of a bird on the bar of a trapeze. This was Frank Melville.

"Turning his head, Thackston looked at Tippett. The man's eyes were fixed upon the boy, his rough lips were quivering.

"There's your circus-boy,' grated Thackston in a low voice. 'He's a pretty live eel for one who should be dead. Don't it strike you so?'

"Tippett didn't answer.

"Clamorous applause greeted the appearance of the favorite, in the midst of which he went into his act with a series of lightning-like revolutions around the bar, doing a headstand with no hand holds or a safety net beneath, then plunging headlong to hang by his toes, while the equestrienne, Marietta, continued her rapid course around the ring, flying, as she went, through hoops and banners fringed with fire.

"It was a wonderful performance on the part of both. And then the audience, watching spellbound, were treated to the breath-taking climax of the act. They saw Frank Melville's body shoot down through the air with the directness of an arrow toward the earth.

"Several people in the stands rose up with outcries, expecting to see him dashed to death. He did not strike the tanbark; he lit upon the broad back of the ring horse behind the surcingle, clasped the fair Mlle. Marietta in his arms, and they both waved their adieus, while the audience cheered them to the echo.

"In the midst of this Thackston arose and plucked the arm of Tippett.

"Come,' he said, 'this is enough. Follow me; I want to talk to you.'

Before the week is out—this is a two-week stand for the Barnum and London Circus—an attempt is made on Frank Melville's life. Someone

takes a crack at him with an air-gun in the Big Top, missing him but causing a tumble from horseback with only minor injury. Frank and Mlle. Marietta have a swiftly ripening affection for each other, which started almost from the moment they paired off in the show's most spectacular feature. Another performer, a dark and handsome young gypsy named Loral, billed as a juggler and slack-wire dancer, also loves the star equestrienne, but he has made no progress in cutting out Frank with Marietta. In fact, these young men had had a bruising battle over the girl already, and Frank was of the opinion that Loral had picked up an air-gun somewhere and tried to erase him. "He has the heart for it," Frank told Etta and she quickly agreed."

It wasn't Tippet, for he had warned Frank there might be an attempt on his life. But Frank didn't know Tippet and discounted the rather mysterious warning until the attempt was made and failed. Despite a stormy session with Thackston, Tippet couldn't be moved to harm the boy. He said, "If I had killed that baby, my conscience would have driven me crazy!"

"Conscience be hanged! A good excuse for cowardice," retorted Thackston. "And here I am in a nice predicament through your treachery!"

"You're not!" Tippet insisted. "This boy was adopted by the circus people and trained up in the profession. They have no more idea of who he really is than he has himself. So where's the danger? For your interests he is virtually as helpless as if I had murdered him!"

"That doesn't suit me," Thackston declared fiercely. "While that boy lives I am not the owner of Mill Bridge Villa—his father has never given up hope he will be found some day—and live men's shoes are uncomfortable things to stand in. That boy must be disposed of."

Hanging around the circus backyard, Thackston had accidentally discovered the bitter enmity between Frank Melville and Loral. Here, in the person of the juggler and slack-

wire artist, was an instrument for foul play, ready to hand. Of course, cash would figure in the deal . . .

"It happened during Frank's second appearance in the center ring one evening. The steel cage had been erected, the black-maned lion had been let into it from the horse-drawn cage wagon from the menagerie. Frank entered the big cage with whip in hand and holstered blank cartridge pistol belted on, and the lion rose up on hind legs and came at him with flailing forepaws and a roar that shook the Big Top. The big cat put on a similar show of ferocity at every performance, but the whip and a blast from Frank's gun usually got him on his pedestal. But not tonight. He kept on charging with the whip cracking in his face, and when Frank yanked his gun and pulled trigger, there was no flash and roar of gunpowder. The smash of a mighty paw hurled him half across the cage, he landed on his back unconscious.

"As the lion turned to bound toward Frank, a white figure flitted, with a scream, past the safety cage and confronted the great jungle beast. Mlle. Marietta always watched this cat act from close by. She had a gun in her hand that spit flame and thunder, but no bullets. The lion backed off. The cage-boy, paralyzed for a moment, hit the door of the safety cage and bounded in with a prod pole. By that time other assistance was coming, Sam Cook, the ringmaster, John Foster, the clown, several more. The cage wagon was being backed hurriedly against the bars of the steel arena . . . the lion, driven into a corner by two jabbing poles and a couple of banging guns—the cage-boy had one—was glad to escape into the smaller cage, to be hauled off by a work team.

"Old John Foster was in a high ferment over his adopted son's narrow escape. Everybody had praise for Mlle. Marietta's brave act in saving Frank's life. But the reason for the lion's determined charge—and why Frank's gun was empty—were unexplained until Horkv, one of the grooms from the pad room, squeezed

through the crowd in Frank's dressing-tent.

"Horky had spied Lalar around Frank's dressing-trunk, handling the red uniform coat which Frank wore during the cat act. Discovering Horky watching him, Lalar had quickly dropped the coat, but Horky noticed the juggler and slack-wire dancer's left hand was apparently bleeding. 'Yeh,' Lalar had said, 'just cut my hand practicing the knife-jugglin' business.' This had happened just before Frank came to don the coat, and the blood smeared on it from Lalar's hand hadn't had time to dry when he stepped into the big cage. They found the smear on the coat when they came to examine it — the smell of fresh blood had roused the lion to a killing frenzy. Lalar must have tampered with Frank's blank-loaded gun to make death certain

"So it's Lalar!" cried old John Foster. "Out, boys, let's search for the scoundrel! If we catch him, Heaven help his dirty neck!"

"At this juncture one of the menagerie men rushed in breathlessly.

"What's up?" cried Keeler, the show manager.

"The big gorilla has broke out of his cage and gone!"

Of course, Lalar had unlocked the door of the gorilla's cage, turned it loose to divert attention from himself while he made his escape. And escape he did, to the camp of gypsies not too far away, and he being a gypsy they gave him sanctuary. The gorilla was recaptured, but running down Lalar was another matter. But Herbert Thackston, accused by Tippet, went to prison and there committed suicide, his plot to inherit his rich brother's estate thwarted. His brother Richard, the father of the boy called "Frank Melville" (his circus name), had found his son at last. It was a joyous day for Richard Thackston but a sad one in a way for old John Foster when he said:

"Frank my boy, I am not your father, as you know. You came into my care when an infant and I adopted you. Your real parent stands before you now."

Frank and Marietta finished the season with the Barnum and London Circus and were married under the Big Top when the show closed in the fall.

Street & Smith made a notable contribution to circuses in their five-cent color cover weeklies, as follows:

Rough Rider Weekly:

#61, The Young Rough Rider's Aerial Voyage, or, The Stranded Circus. #106, King of the Wild West Underground, or, Stella to the Rescue ("Greatest Three-Ring Circus in the World"—"Most Stupendous Aggregation of Talent and Daring Ever Gathered Under Canvas" — "Shasta Sam and His Seven Tame Lions" — from posters advertising Shasta Sam's Circus, of which he was owner and star performer, billed as lion trainer. This story and others in Rough Rider Weekly by top dime novelist Harry St. George Rathborne).

Diamond Dick, Jr. Weekly

Apparently there were no circus stories in connection with the Diamond Dicks in the black-and-white Nugget Library or Diamond Dick Library, but plenty in the color cover weekly. George C. Jenks, once a circus press agent, wrote at least three of them. #446, 532, 565.

#32, Diamond Dick, Jr.'s Big Contract, or, How Handsome Harry Beat the Circus, #78. Diamond Dick, Jr.'s Circus, or, All In at the Lulu Dance, #180, Diamond Dick, Jr.'s Chariot Race, or, Lively Times in the Main Tent, #181, Diamond Dick, Jr.'s Side Show, or, An Elephant Lost, Strayed or Stolen, #182, Diamond Dick, Jr.'s Top-Liner, or, Two-Spot's Two-Ring Performance, #242, Diamond Dick's Split Trick, or, The Dashing Duo and the Circus Crooks, #291, Diamond Dick's Mid-air Fight, or, At Odds With the Circus Crooks, #317, Reprint of #32, #345, Diamond Dick at the Circus, or, An Old Friend in a New Game. #408, Diamond Dick, Jr. and the Showmen, or, Handsome Harry's Circus, #411, Diamond Dick, Jr. and the Circus Sharps, or, Crooked Work at Flushville. #446, Handsome Harry in the Big Ring, or, Hey, Rube, in Arizona, #532, Diamond Dick's

Black Sign, or, A Strange Battle With a Dead Man, #565, Diamond Dick in a Brace Game, or, Fighting Against Odds in a Circus, #653, Diamond Dick's Circus "Stunt", or, In the Path of a Rogue.

Tip Top Weekly

#587—Dick Merriwell, Lion-Tamer, or, Ate, Queen of the Air.

#766—Frank Merriwell's Young Acrobat, or, The Boy from the Sawdust Ring.

Buffalo Bill Stories

#328—Buffalo Bill's Flying Wonder, or, Zamba, the King of Fire.

Might and Main Library

#7—Bound to Succeed, or, The Boy Who Owned a Circus.

Brave and Bold Weekly

#68, The Young Acrobat, or, The Great North American Circus, by Horatio Alger, Jr., #111, A Bandit of Costa Rica, or, The Story of a Stranded Circus, by Cornelius Shea, #132, Nimble Nick, the Circus Prince, or, The Fortunes of a Bareback Rider, by Albert W. Aiken, #143, New England Nick, or, The Fortunes of a Foundling, by Albert W. Aiken, #141 The Boy Athlete, or, Out With a Show in Colorado, by Lieut. A. K. Sims, #216, At the Red Horse, or, Herr Driesbach, the Lion King, by Charles H. Day, #219, Afloat With a Circus, or, The Diamond-seekers of Natal, by Henry L. Black, #224, The Elephant Boy, or, Behind the Scenes in a Menagerie, by Charles H. Day, #296 Ahead of the Show, or, Adventures of a Young Advance Agent, by Fred Thorpe, #341, Bob, the Acrobat, or, Hustle and Win Out, by Harrie Irving Hancock, #347, A Young Snake-Charmer, or, The Fortunes of Dick Erway, by Fred Thorpe.

Do and Dare Weekly

By Stanley Norris (William Wallace Cook took over the writing of the weekly with #15, completing this issue after the author who started the series fell ill):

#11, Phil Rushington's Great Show or, Another Turn of Fortune's Wheel, #12, Phil Rushington's Star Rider, or, Rivals of the Ring, #13, Phil Rushington's Home Trip, or, Two Kinds

of a Circus, #14, Phil Rushington's Loss, or, A Lion Hunt in the City, #15, Phil Rushington's Rivals, or, Three Shows in One Town, #16, Phil Rushington's Clown, or, The Secret of the Star Rider, #17, Phil Rushington's Temptation, or, An Act Not Down on the Bills, #18, Phil Rushington's Race, or, The Pursuit of the Rival Circus, #19, Phil Rushington's Prize, or, The Show for Tent Number Two, #20, Phil Rushington's Search, or, The Unknown Rider of the Ring, #21, Phil Rushington's Enemies, or, Saving His Reputation, #22, Phil Rushington's SmashUp, or, A New Recruit for the Sawdust Ring, #23, Phil Rushington's Foes, or, The Man Who Nearly Stole a Circus, #24, Phil Rushington's Tackle, or, Cleaning Out the Swindlers, #25, Phil Rushington's Specialty, or, "Bear and Forbear" in the Main Tent, #26, Phil Rushington's Stampede, or, A Serious Hitch in the Parade, #27, Phil Rushington's Dash, or, The Last Act in the Hippodrome, #28, Phil Rushington's Hoodoo, or, Something Wrong With the Show, #29, Phil Rushington's Girl Wonder, or, The Rope-Walker's Peril.

*Two titles were given for #23, the other being Phil Rushington's Trust, or, The Child Trapeze Wonder.

If ever there was a chance for the publication of a weekly devoted to the circus, this was it. William Wallace Cook was a top-grade writer, the color covers were good. But apparently even boy readers didn't want it, week after week. Sixteen of these stories were reprinted, 4 to the volume, in New Medal Library Nos. 474, 480, 486 and 492, and issued again by David McKay in a clothbound edition under the titles Phil, the Showman, The Young Showman's Rivals, The Young Showman's Pluck, The Young Showman's Triumph.

New Nick Carter Weekly

#120, Fighting the Circus Crooks, or, Ten Thousand Dollars Short, #634 The Tiger-tamer, or, Nick Carter's Boldest Strategy, #635, A Strange Bargain, or, Nick Carter's Deadshot Circus Case, #636, The Haunted Circus, or, Nick Carter Lays a Ghost.

Motor Stories

#27, Motor Matt's Engagement, or, On the Road With a Show, #28, Motor Matt's Short Circuit, or, The Ma-hout's Vow, #29, Motor Matt's Make-up, or, Playing a New Role.

The End

EXCERPTS FROM LEITERS TO THE EDITORS

Dear Mr. LeBlanc,

Please accept my sincerest thanks for your most welcome and deeply appreciated letter of August 5, 1968. It was good to get your message, together with the most interesting copies of the "Dime Novel Round-Up." I am glad to hear that you are also a collector of Dime Novels. I have heard of Monsieur George Fronval in Paris, and of Mr. Denis R. Rogers in London from some French and British friends.

Next to the American Dime Novels the British and French Dime Novel publications were the best. And as far as the Dime Novels illustrations were concerned the ones of the French Dime Novels were far the best.

The German Dime Novels had a much poorer make-up although they were enthusiastically read by most German youngsters, as well as by countless grown-up friends of western literature.

The best Dime Novels were published by the Verlagshaus für Volksliteratur und Kunst, Gitschiner-Str. 13, Berlin SW, Germany. But as far as I know this Verlagshaus (publishing house) no longer exists. It had much trouble during the barbaric rule of the Nazis, because Hitler and his ilk were absolutely opposed to all Dime Novels that in one way or the other glorified or at least wrote the truth about foreign heroes. But when publishing houses issued Dime Novels glorifying only German heroes and slandering the foreign characters in the stories as cowards, cheats, traitors, murderers and thieves, etc., they were not molested at all. They even received the praise and support of those leading Nazis who worshipped Hitler's non-existent idol of the Ger-

man master racial superman!

The old time Dime Novel writer Karl May, who died in 1912 in Saxony in Germany, was the one who had created the imaginary German (Dime Novel) heroes of Old Shatterhand, Old Surehand, Old Firehand, and others who were of course all Germans and who were also of course the world's masters of boxing, knifethrowing, rifle and pistol shooting, of the use of the lasso, of the Indian bow and arrow, of tomahawk throwing, and of grizzly-puma- and buffalo-hunting. At one time the German superhero Old Shatterhand, at the time of his imaginary appearance in the Far West, was a perfect greenhorn, despite this he killed three grizzlies with a knife at the same time (one after another) while the American Westerners who appeared in the story as hunters, climbed a tree out of fear of the grizzlies!!

He also created the imaginary Indian hero Winnetou, Chief of the Apaches. In May's opinion, the Apaches were the finest, most cultured and most peaceful of all American Indian nations, while the Sioux were described by him as the most cruel, the most ignorant, and the most cowardly ones!

It has been said in Germany that Hitler himself had read Karl May's swindle stories about the old American West, and that he had gained many of his master racial ideas from May's impossible writings! I believe it, because Hitler's entire actions in matters pertaining in the main to the training of the so called Hitler Youth Organization (The Boy Scouts of the Nazi time!) showed that he had obtained his practical experiences as a militant "superman" from the reading of May's books!

The worst is, that even today German libraries, reading halls, etc., are fully stocked with May's books! They are again read by millions of children, by grown-ups, by soldiers and other lovers of adventures, and of stories about the God-Almightiness of the German master-race, of German master-minds, and of always victorious and man-killing German heroes.

Karl May, the author of the so-called

May Books, had never visited America, and much less did he ever see the American West. The English words he now and then uses in his books are absolutely erroneous, and also so badly translated into German that they are aggravating to readers who know the English language, and who also know especially American western expressions. The same may be said of the few words of the Apache, Sioux, or Comanche languages which he uses now and then in his books. As far as his stories about the American West are concerned I have had knowledge that he translated stories written by a writer in England into German and having them published. He just changed the nationality of the characters of the stories. That is, he made all heroes to Germans, and all crooks, bandits, murderers and fools to either Americans, Englishmen or Frenchmen!

Therefore, he was just the one and most usable hero-writer for cheap and illiterate characters like Hitler, Himmler or Kaltenbrunner.

Fifty years ago the price of a dime novel was about 5 Cents=25 German Pfennigs. Years later the price was 20 German Pfennigs, but today collectors pay as much as from 5 to 6 German Marks for one novel (one U. S. dollar and more!).

The copies of dime novels that I obtained were mostly in a very bad condition. But as they are for the most older than I am, and as they had to outlive two world wars, and the destructive air-raids it is a wonder at all that copies are still existent in this country.

Once more, many thanks for your kind letter. It meant a lot to me as I am very lonesome for America. And please excuse the many mistakes and corrections in my letter. I am getting older, I am ill and I am not able to write as fluently in English as I was able to do many years ago.

Kindest regards and good wishes.
—Oscar C. Pfafs, Postfach 4640, 2 Hamburg 43, West Germany.

(Ed. note—Mr. Pfafs has been enrolled as a member and has promised to prepare a list of dime novels that

appeared in Germany.)

Dear Ed: The September Roundup received and as usual it is chock full of not only interesting but informative reading. Tell Ed Leithead that his "long listings" he mentions do not become "boring." Rather, they bring back memories. Am also enjoying Ralph Cummings' history of the Brotherhood.

Regarding Dwight Smith's letter and your note on page 94 about hard cover book collectors. I have to admit of being guilty of this phase of collecting. My collection of these old time boys books is not large. It consists of 173 books by authors such as Alger, Henty, Stratemeyer, Ellis, Optic, Tomlinson, Kellogg, Otis, etc. and I would be pleased to correspond with any other "buff".

I am slowly recovering from my surgery of last May. My best regards to you and all of the other old timers and the best of health to all. Sincerely
—Louis H. Dreyer, Pasadena, Calif.

NOTE

Mr. Harry Pulfer of 2700 Mary St., La Crescenta, California 91214, a Dime Novel Roundup subscriber has published a **MANUAL FOR OLD CAR RESTORERS & COLLECTORS**. Price is \$1.00. Of interest to dime novel collectors is a section which pictures early automobiles, trolley cars, and other modes of horseless transportation.

WANTED

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Total distribution	282	285
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Total	500	500

I certify that the statements made by
me above are correct and complete.

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NEWSY NEWS

By Ralph F. Cummings

Charles F. Westbrook, E1204 Illinois Ave., Spokane, Wash. 99207—needs these numbers of Liberty Boys of '76: 113, 115, 118, 120, 167, 188, 195, 197, 198 and 612. Says he'd rather have the original numbers than the reprints, but if he can't find the originals, then he'll take the reprints if the covers are the same. Can any one help Charles to get these numbers?

Charlie asys thse first 100 numbers of the Liberty Boys of 76 weren't so hot, but after that, no doubt a different artist did the drawings, and they were a big improvement over the low numbers.

Charlie says every time he gets a letter about Liberty Boys in it, he gets the fever all over again. They

were the first of the colored ones that he read as a boy. Says he was Dick Slater, the reason he was him was because he could like the other guy and he had to settle for Bob Esterbrook. That was a long time ago, about 60 years. Seems like yesterday.

Charlie says he and Fred Lee started trading novels in 1933 and ended in 1966, a short time before Fred died. Charles had ordered a couple of Liberty Boys from Fred after his death, not knowing that he had died.

Charles started to collect in 1932 and at one time had over 400 Liberty Boys from number 1 up. After that he sold, traded, or almost gave them away. It's hard to believe, but he sold some as low as 25 cents. He remembers at one time of selling five Liberty Boys in the early hundreds 6 for \$1.50. Boy oh boy, those were the days.

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

291. Dr. Oscar C. Pfaus, Postfach 4640, 2 Hamburg 43, West Germany (New)
292. William H. Beadle, 900 Palmer Road, Bronxville, N. Y. 10708 (New)
293. Mr. J. Carlo, New York Historical Society Library, 170 Central Park West, New York, N. Y. 10024 (New member)

ATTENTION OLD TIMERS

Advanced collector desires better edition and condition (preferably 1st editions) following Alger books. Have many Porter & Coates, etc., duplicates from own collection for sale or trade:

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Also hundreds better condition and edition books for sale or trade in following authors: Stratemeyer, Chapman, Appleton, Winfield, Bonehill, Patten, Standish, Scott, Barbour, Young, etc.

Leo F. Moore

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